

Abroad

Peking

Targets in Eastern Europe

China has actively begun to cultivate the Communist-bloc countries of Eastern Europe, long denounced here as "revisionists" and lackeys of Moscow, but now rehabilitated to the level of "socialist states." Hu Yaobang, secretary general of the Chinese Communist Party, is expected shortly in Rumania and Yugoslavia, both of which have long been sympathetic onlookers in China's struggles with the Soviet Union. At the same time, two high-ranking diplomats, one of them a deputy foreign minister, will visit East Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest, Sofia, and Prague. These visits are labeled "embassy inspections," but the diplomats will almost certainly be holding significant talks with their opposite numbers in these capitals. Commercial, sporting, and cultural association is the immediate aim of the Chinese, but no doubt a close inter-party relationship is also in view. Care will have to be exercised, however, to avoid the impression that Peking is seeking to detach any member of the Warsaw Pact—as happened with Rumania, now sufficiently independent of Moscow that it feels free to choose its own side in Sino-Soviet conflicts.

Rome

Empty Glasses

Italy produces more wine than any other country, but Italians now rank only third among its consumers. Italians drink, on average, 74 liters of wine a year, so the Portuguese, whose consumption is 77 liters, have eased them out of second place, behind the perennial first-placers, the French. Part of the reason, according to Italian wine authorities, is the stepped-up pace of Italian life. People no longer have the leisure to drink a glass or two of wine with their lunch. Instead, the modern Italian gulps his meal in the form of a sandwich. And if he is young, he probably guzzles a soft drink. As for red wine, which represents the bulk of Italian production, there is the added circumstance that "working people feel it makes them sleepy"—this from an agriculture ministry official who deals with the subject.

New Delhi

The Other Frontier

All has been quiet along the "other" great frontier of Asia—the 1,200 miles of mountainous territory that separate India from China—although the territorial dispute that caused the Sino-Indian war of 1962 is still a source of bitterness between Delhi and Peking. Recently both countries have taken steps toward improving their relations, and a series of bi-lateral talks ended just the other day in the Chinese capital. Further talks are to be held in Delhi in the near future. The Chinese say that the frontier, demarcated originally by the British colonial authority, has to be reconsidered along its whole length. The Indians say there is no need to raise the question of change. In real terms they are discussing a Chinese claim to the remote Aksai Chin plateau in the western sector of the frontier, and in the east a Chinese challenge to the so-called MacMahon line. For the last thirty years, China has claimed effective control of Aksai Chin, while the Indians have adhered to

their MacMahon outposts. Since the return to power of Deng Xiaoping, there has been an effort to reduce Chinese pressure on the frontier question. China, for example, has noticeably ceased taking sides in the Kashmir dispute. She has also revived a pre-1962 suggestion that the de facto frontiers be accepted by both sides. Chinese diplomats are well aware of Indira Gandhi's close ties to the Soviet Union, but from their point of view this does not represent a critical obstacle to a *modus vivendi*.

St. Helena

Napoleon's Envy

Aubrey Theodore Stevens is one of the few men Napoleon might genuinely have envied: he is being deported from St. Helena. Stevens was convicted last year of murdering a policeman in Jamestown, the village capital of this South Atlantic island, not far from Longwood, the house in which Napoleon spent the last six years of his life in melancholy exile. The little prison of St. Helena has only five cells and is much too familiar a place—the prisoners are allowed to swim in the sea when the weather is hot, for example—for a man sentenced to life imprisonment for such a crime. The island government therefore petitioned authorities in London under the Colonial Prisoners Removal Act of 1885 to have Stevens incarcerated in England instead of on St. Helena, and the Home Office has agreed. But there is a further problem. St. Helena has no airport, and the ship that connects it with England calls only every two months. The next trip is booked solid, so Stevens will have to wait, especially since he cannot travel by himself. "Mr. Stevens will have an escort of course," says St. Helena's Attorney General Hoole. "We would expect two policemen to accompany him. We just have not the facilities to keep a man here for life." At least not since 1821.



Fisher, PUNCH

"Hey! What about a balanced, mutually verifiable pull-back on the snide remarks?"